

Mathew 5:23-24: Ministry of Reconciliation

**<sup>23</sup> Therefore, if you are presenting your [o]ffering at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your [o]ffering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your [o]ffering.**

**<sup>23</sup> Therefore,**

Last week, we were told about the angry, hateful, murderous attitude that we should not have, and this week we learn that part of our expression of gratitude and love toward God is our willingness to take \_\_\_\_\_ and extend the same grace that we have been shown by God in saving us by working to reconcile our \_\_\_\_\_ with each other.

**if you are presenting your offering at the altar,**

Since it's an offering to God at the altar, this can only mean that is a \_\_\_\_\_ or freewill offering expressing thankfulness and a desire to draw near to God. It begins with the same kind of attitude of humility before God, recognizing that we are spiritually bankrupt, that attitude of those who are blessed for being **poor in spirit**, in Mathew 5:3.

**and there you remember that your brother has something against you,**

So often, God chooses to speak to us while we are \_\_\_\_\_ Him, worshipping Him, thanking Him. God wants a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with you, and it's during these times when you are willing.

How does God bring something up? When God brings something to my heart, it's usually through His \_\_\_\_\_. God will suddenly bring a scripture to \_\_\_\_\_ that maybe we haven't thought of in a long time. God can cause us to \_\_\_\_\_ (John 14:26). We are encouraged to read, meditate on, and memorize the scripture (e.g. Psalm 119:11). God uses the Word that we have \_\_\_\_\_ up in our hearts to bring just the exact scripture that we need in a particular situation, or to help with a \_\_\_\_\_ that we are dealing with. But God can't bring scriptures to our remembrance that we have \_\_\_\_\_ read or heard!

**<sup>24</sup> leave your offering there before the altar**

God would rather you go and make things right with your brother or sister in Christ, than to stay and offer \_\_\_\_\_ and thanksgiving to Him. God cares about our relationships with others, and it's by allowing God to \_\_\_\_\_ in our own hearts, healing the hurt, that we can draw \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. You can't make them want to be reconciled to you, but you can do your \_\_\_\_\_ to be reconciled to them.

In other words, if you want to draw close to God, the way is not through making more sacrifices, but letting God \_\_\_\_\_ your relationship with Him and with others.

Don't make sacrifices, instead be Godly and righteous. Peter came to the same conclusion regarding Godly Living in 1 Peter 3:8-9: **8 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble; 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you would inherit a blessing. Go; first be reconciled to your brother**

It's not easy. We are to be **in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith** (Philippians 1:27). Since we know the comfort and \_\_\_\_\_ of God in Christ, and have experienced the consolation of Christ's love that has brought them through many trials and dangers, since we have participated in \_\_\_\_\_ with the Holy Spirit, and know the affection and compassion of God toward them by saving them and by in his continued

mercy, our \_\_\_\_\_ is made complete in unity (Philippians 2:2). We must “make up their our mind to strive, to exert our \_\_\_\_\_ to be in unity with Jesus and with our brothers and sisters. It takes effort to ignore the slight, the rudeness, the insult, the inconsideration because we’re Christians. We must choose to turn the other cheek, because THAT’S what Jesus commands us to do.

It seems like it’s such a big “ask” from God, but when we think of what Christ has \_\_\_\_\_ done for us, how we’ve \_\_\_\_\_ God by sinning in so many ways, so many times against Him, and yet God was willing to send His only Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins, and for the sins of the person who has offended us, then maybe it’s not so much to ask that we \_\_\_\_\_ and be reconciled with our brother or sister. God loved us when we were \_\_\_\_\_. God had compassion on us, and pity on us as sinners long \_\_\_\_\_ we asked forgiveness, so maybe we should be the ones who reach out to those who haven’t yet asked for our forgiveness, or maybe those to whom \_\_\_\_\_ owe an apology.

We are \_\_\_\_\_, not so much to stir this love up toward those who have hurt us, but to let the love of God that we experience within us flow out of us into service to one another in love, affection and compassion.

We live for Jesus now, we are a new creation in Him. And as 2 Corinthians 5 reminds us in verse 19 **And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.**

The primary reason we are to leave our gift at the altar, and go and be reconciled to our brother before we offer our gift, is so that we can be \_\_\_\_\_ as Christ’s ambassadors and so Jesus’ priority is that you be reconciled to our brother or sister \_\_\_\_\_,

**and then come and present your offering.**

God accepts offerings from hearts that are \_\_\_\_\_ with Him. So, the priorities here are clear—first be reconciled with our brother or sister, then come and present our offering from a \_\_\_\_\_ that is right with God and with your brothers and sisters. Then God will accept your offering and \_\_\_\_\_ you.